

REMARKS

Claims 1, 7, 8, 10, and 12-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP Publication Number 1294202 (“Chen”) in view of U.S. Patent Publication Number 2002/0114274 (“Sturges”). Claims 2-6, 11, and 16 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chen in view of Sturges and further in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,493,349 (“Casey”). Claim 9 was rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chen in view of Sturges and further in view of U.S. Patent Number 6,882,643 (“Mauger”). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

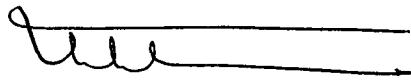
As a preliminary matter, Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 15 is allowable if rewritten in independent form. In reliance on this indication, Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 7 to include allowable features of claim 15. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 1 and 7, along with their dependent claims. Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are patentable over the cited prior art. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection under § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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